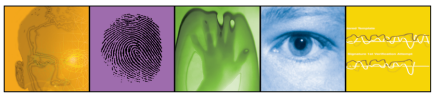

Backgrounder

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BIOMETRICS
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

The use of bodily characteristics to identify humans can be traced as far back as the 14th century where the Chinese are said to have used fingerprint as a form of signature. This method of identification has evolved into what is now called biometrics - the measurable, physical characteristics or behavioral traits used to recognize the identity, or verify the claimed identity, of individuals. Today, biometrics is used as an authorization tool for physical access to secure areas and logical (network) access to secure network data. Within the Department of Defense (DoD), biometric technology is an integral tool for force protection and network security.

In July 2000, the DoD responded to the growing interest and requirements for biometrics through Section 112 of the Emergency Supplemental Act 2000, Public Law 106-246. This Public Law designated the Department of the Army as the executive agent for developing and implementing biometric technology. It also directed the Army to lead, consolidate and coordinate all biometrics information assurance activities for DoD on behalf of the Assistant Secretary of Defense Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence. Out of this directive came the DoD Biometrics Management Office (BMO) and the Biometrics Fusion Center (BFC).

Today, the DoD BMO is composed of DoD Agency personnel, representatives from each of the Services and Defense contractors. The office's initiatives include analyzing DoD biometric requirements, identifying appropriate commercial-of-the-shelf technologies (COTS) for DoD testing and evaluation, developing DoD policies and standards for biometrics, and establishing partnerships with industry and academia. The partnerships have resulted in educational enrichment opportunities for DoD and awareness of DoD biometric requirements throughout industry.

The BFC operates as the BMO's center for testing and evaluating COTS. BFC researchers conduct product assessments and pilot projects, which are detailed assessments of biometric technologies. During pilots, BFC researchers facilitate an in-depth analysis of the technology in a real-life testing and simulation environment to determine its capabilities. A successful assessment results in the technology being considered acceptable for implementation. The center is also in the process of developing storage methods for biometric templates.

In addition to product assessments and pilot projects, the BFC is also involved in the implementation of biometrics on the common access card (CAC), a smart card that serves as a military and DoD civilian ID card for physical and network access. This project, that will greatly impact force protection requirements, is scheduled to be fully implemented throughout DoD by 2004.

Future initiatives carried out by the BMO and the BFC rely heavily on the influence of two factors -- tomorrow's security needs and homeland defense efforts.